

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD**

Date: 3 September 2008

Subject: **Regional Housing Strategy Action Plan: Update on Progress**

Report of: Director of Development
South East England Regional Assembly

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Regional Housing Board (RHB):

1. Encourages the Housing Corporation to commit the funding necessary for supported housing needs mapping to be undertaken during the current financial year
2. Brings forward to 2008/09 the actions identified in the RHS for 2009/10 in relation to exploring potential to promote sustainable development and changes in domestic energy use
3. Receives a further report at its next meeting that sets out specific proposals to enable the principle of sustainable development to be embedded in Board partners' business plans.

Purpose of the Report:

To report progress in implementing the RHS action plan.

Key Issues:

The RHS action plan sets out the Board's work programme for 2008-11.

Actions are generally progressing to timetable although some changes have been necessary to respond to consultation timetables and other developments.

Work in progress now and planned for the next six months will inform the RHS action plan for 2009/10 and 2010/11 and regional housing priorities for the longer term.

1. Background

- 1.1 The RHS was published in April 2008 to coincide with the start of the current regional housing investment programme. For the first time, the RHS included a plan of actions that Board partners committed to take to continue improvement of the region's evidence base and inform the Board's priorities beyond 2011. A summary of the action plan for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and progress to date appears at Annex 1.

2. Progress to date

Priority groups

- 2.1 The focus for the current year is on the ageing population. Analysis of recently published population projections is to be discussed by the Regional Housing Forum (RHF) in October with a view to highlighting needs relating to any specific pressures in parts of the region which may need to be considered in developing Regional Funding Advice to Government.
- 2.2 Following publication of the national strategy for housing in an ageing society, Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods, a work programme has been developed for the RHF to support delivery of RHS action plan. The Forum will also take forward aspects of Regional Assembly research on care needs and costs which is nearing completion. Forum projects relating to the ageing population are scheduled for completion in time to report advice to the Board in May 2009 and, along with a project planned by GOSE/Department of Health will contribute to the Board's wider objective for 2009/10 to develop a vision for the region regarding housing for the ageing population.

Supporting vulnerable people

- 2.3 The Housing Corporation and the South East Regional Implementation Group (SERIG) for Supporting People are in discussion about jointly funding a project to enable the Board to make better informed decisions regarding the proportion of public investment in affordable housing allocated to supported housing schemes. The estimated cost of the project is £40,000 to be shared equally between the Housing Corporation and South East Supporting People authorities. There is some risk attached to this project if it is not commissioned during the current financial year due to forthcoming changes in funding for Supporting People. A verbal update will be made to advise of when funding would need to be confirmed for the work to be completed during 2008/09.
- 2.4 Advice from English Partnerships in respect of the Brownfield Land Assembly Company will be reported verbally.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Action relating to sustainable development was scheduled for 2009/10. In view of the recommendations of the Assembly's select committee on reducing the ecological footprint and current concerns about fuel price rises, it is proposed that this work should receive more urgent attention, starting with

consideration of SEEDA-led retro-fitting research recommendations on 20 November. These can form the basis for embedding sustainable development in RHB partners' business plans and identifying specific activity that RHB partners can engage in with providers and suppliers.

- 3.2 The Regional Assembly plans to bring forward to 2008/09 a review of evidence from Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.

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Regional Housing Strategy Action Plan 2008-11 – progress as at September 2008

2008/09 actions	When ¹	Progress to date	Action planned to end of March 2009
Priority groups – Ageing population			
Identify parts of the region likely to experience greatest pressure, or change in pressure, arising from an ageing population	Q1	Analysis of latest population projections data relating to the ageing population is in progress Assembly research on future care needs nearing completion	Regional Housing Forum (RHF) to consider population projections analysis in October 2008 and advise on needs relating to any specific pressures in parts of the region
Improve understanding of the housing and associated needs and aspirations of the ageing population and identify implications for the housing stock	Q3	Project briefs prepared and RHF task groups set up	Projects due to complete March 2009 and report to RHB May 2009
Supporting Vulnerable People			
Quantify the need for and nature of accommodation-based and floating support services for vulnerable households to enable regional prioritisation of investment in supported housing schemes		Brief for project prepared; funding position to be confirmed by Housing Corporation and SERIG Proposed project commissioning date to be reported verbally on 3 September	
Affordable housing			
Review evidence base on barriers to delivery and identify priority actions	Q1	Priority actions agreed by RHB January 2008	Programme of actions scheduled for delivery autumn 2008
Decent Homes			
Provide support to local authority	Q2	Information on activity during first six	Review of private sector renewal

¹ Q refers to the relevant quarter of the financial year

partnerships in developing equity release and other forms of loan to enable home owners to finance essential improvements to their homes		months of programme being gathered from local authority partnerships	programme to be reported to RHB 20 November 2008
Gypsies and Travellers			
Provide contribution to consultation on Gypsy and Traveller South East Plan partial review based on their experience of 2006-08 grant programme	Q1	Consultation period rescheduled to 1 September to 21 November 2008	RHB to consider its response to consultation on 20 November
Funding and delivery mechanisms			
Explore with CLG the impact that the national housing subsidy has on South East England	Q2	Government review of the subsidy system commenced March 2008	Options for RHB input to the review to be considered on 20 November
Work with regional partners to support development of innovative delivery mechanisms	Q1 (BLAC) Q2 (RIF)	Work in progress; latest developments and advice to be reported to RHB 3 September	To be advised
2009/10 actions			
Sustainable Development			
Explore financial barriers to achieving higher design and environmental standards including Level 4 and above of the Code for Sustainable Homes in new affordable housing	Q1	Initial discussion held June 2008	Sector-specific input to be sought via the National Housing Federation
Explore potential to promote sustainable development and changes in domestic energy use through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retro-fitting energy efficiency measures to existing homes • Providing access to a regional data source (e.g. Hi4EM) • Identifying and promoting good 	Q3	SEEDA-led retro-fitting research in progress	To be reported to RHB November 2008; findings and recommendations to form basis of action plan

practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the supply chain to encourage a reduction in the cost of materials and a reduction in consumption of natural resources 		Ecological footprint issues suggest that sustainable development work should be speeded up and the focus of retro-fitting widened to include water consumption	Importance of water consumption issues in retro-fitting research to be discussed with SEEDA
Priority groups			
Investigate whether BME affordable housing needs are being met effectively through current forms of provision	Q3	To be confirmed	
Develop a vision for the region regarding housing for the ageing population			Outcome of 2008/09 RHF projects and linked work by Dept Health/ GOSE public health team to be reported to RHB May 2009
Peer review the outcome of Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs)	Q4		The Regional Assembly plans to commission a review of SHMA and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment evidence to commence Q3 or Q4 of 2008/09
Gypsies and Travellers			
Review the assessment criteria in light of the outcome of the South East Plan partial review	Q3	To be confirmed	